White Paper

Why partnership and value matter
The evolution of better service and support

Contents

Your world of information
Bigger, faster, more chaotic

Each day, 2.5 quintillion bytes of data are created.[1] Every 1.2 years, the volume of business data doubles.[1] Only 20% of this data is structured, while 80% is unstructured, made up of Facebook posts, emails, photos, spreadsheets, documents, cat memes, and more.[1] Faced with this onrush, "many companies risk becoming data rich but insight poor."[2]

Concurrent with this explosion of data, the pace of technological and organizational change continues to gain speed. Cloud-based solutions are proliferating, web use on the PC is being replaced with the smartphone, and the demand for mobile imaging capabilities and big data applications for documents is skyrocketing. And that is just the tip of the technology [data] iceberg.

Today, organizations must not only focus on core businesses, but additionally on the management of this sprawling, revved up, and chaotic environment. It's not difficult to see how one can lose focus on core business functions while trying to survive and thrive in today's give me more, make it faster, make it easier, environment.
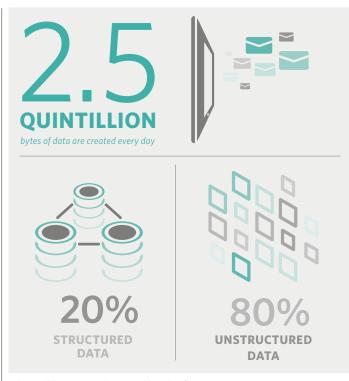
Finding the right needles in every haystack

For those who discover and use smarter strategies and tools, data chaos can not only be tamed, but turned into insight, wisdom, and action. Companies are using big data understanding to:

- Increase overall revenue (73%)[1]
- Grow existing revenue streams (57%)[1]
- Create new sources of revenue (43%)[1]
- Detect and track suspicious behavior (82%)[1]
- Strengthen internal compliance[1]

Put succinctly, digital transformation is key: the improvement of business processes by pulling insights from integrated data.

The shift to outcome-based services and solutions

A key aspect of success in this area is the growing awareness and importance of outcome-based rather than product-centric solutions with organizational services and support. In this context, it is a value-added focus that extends to forming partnerships with world-class services organizations to help alleviate the operational burden of data chaos. The sheer volume and intensity of informational life today means that

The proliferation and types of big data[1].

old-style models of repair and maintenance services no longer meet all of an organization's needs. In fact, continuing under an obsolete service relationship may increase the organization's burden and waste budget dollars.

A challenging new world of relentless data requires that a new, outcome-based paradigm be established by services providers. This involves a shift from a narrow break/fix approach to a far more all-encompassing, partnership model that delivers expansive, value-added capabilities and transformational advantages – including worry free repair and maintenance, support for core functions through professional services, and offloading non-core functions with managed services.

Assessing services providers
Needs, considerations, and value

Rapid changes in information management and the ceaseless growth of data chaos demand an equivalent adaptation in terms of what services providers offer to your organization. Considerations range from applied technological fluency to traditional repair/maintenance expertise, to added-value managed and professional services, and beyond.

The following are seven areas to consider when evaluating and selecting a services provider that will be your partner in navigating the path into and through digital transformation.

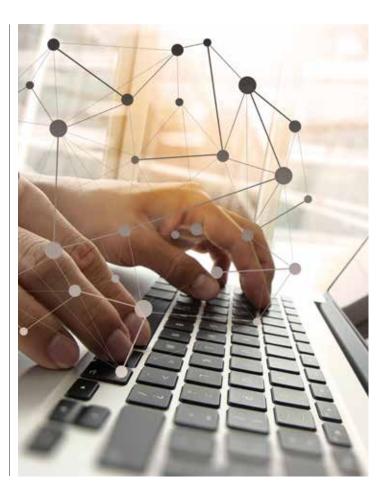# 1. Achieving value from technological expertise

Needs

Today, it's difficult to justify paying a premium for technological expertise by itself. Only when superior technical abilities are transformed into practical benefits for you – and deliver lasting, enhanced outcomes – do they become worth a price. Cost vs. value of technology delivered is a critical baseline aspect to consider.

Considerations

- Does the services organization offer – or create – new or hybrid consumption models? If yes, ask for examples and descriptions.

- How will they aid in optimizing ongoing operational costs?

- Outline your specific, desired outcomes and ask, "Can you help us achieve results like these through technology, and how would you approach the goals that we have?"

- If Technology as a Service (XaaS) is important to you, is this within their abilities and expertise?

- How will a provider help you optimize your existing technology, hardware, software, and systems?

Value

This is one area of consideration where outcome-based services and solutions gain the greatest importance. When a services provider truly learns your business, this deeper level of understanding empowers them to not only fulfill needs, but to develop innovative, beneficial solutions.

2. Finding a true partner vs. a basic provider

Needs

Change is hard and happens slowly within organizations, and the same is true for services providers. Some organizations continue to have an older mindset, believing that services can still survive without an "s" on the end. However, with ever-growing needs for added-value, outcome-based services and solutions, finding a genuine partner, not a transactional provider, opens up multiple new worlds. The considerations below are benefits that can be obtained through a meaningful partnership.[3]

Considerations

- **Quality**
  Can the services candidate demonstrate all the aspects that quality encompasses for you, from highly skilled engineers to beneficial professional services and support throughout your entire product/process life cycle?

- **Responsiveness**
  How quickly can this organization get you back up and running? Are services provided through multiple means? Are they proactive in important ways to spot issues and address these before they become larger problems?

- **Competitiveness**
  This encompasses multiple aspects, beginning with intimately coming to know your business, equipment, processes, workflow, people and other key criteria. In what ways do they help you become more competitive, do more, and advance your organization?

- **Innovation**
  The right service partner can make significant contributions to new product development, process enhancement, workflow tweaking, improved efficiency and beyond. Can they cite examples of meaningful innovation?

- **Savings**
  A partner organization will offer discounts for multi-year agreements, prevent you from experiencing surprise expenses, and streamline new equipment performance and processes for faster ROI. You want them to be as invested in your company as you are.

Value

Exceptional services quality builds customer and employee satisfaction, benefitting your people, processes, and relationships. Savvy service partners are keenly aware of trends and innovative directions and can help keep you apprised with information you can use to explore new possibilities. A true services partner lives with processes and equipment like yours every day. If they're paying attention and insightful, this knowledge can be transferred and leveraged to your benefit.

"To achieve greater profitability and gain a competitive edge, many more companies are partnering with their suppliers. Such relationships are characterized by a high level of trust, mutual respect, open and efficient communication, shared risks and rewards, commitment to each other's success, and the ability to constructively deal with differences."[4]

3. Global capabilities, infrastructure, and flexibility to meet demand and growth

Needs

Size matters when it comes to consistency, processes, and capabilities. Carefully considering your own international presence – region-by-region and country-by-country, as well as the geographic distribution of domestic locations – is important when matching your operations with those of a global services provider. Beyond geography, a good-fit services organization should be flexible in what it offers for response times, plans, customization, methods of support, and all other factors critical to your operational success.

Considerations

- How many service personnel does the services provider have in your geographic area? What are their titles, roles, and experience?
- What is the escalation process and how does it function?
- What is the depth and breadth of infrastructure in terms of facilities, equipment, and technology?

- If off-site repair is required, how close and well suited are their facilities to ensure timely, expert repair service?
- What choices are offered in response times? And what times of day and night are these response times available?
- Within service and support plans, can you request and receive preferences for types of assistance, such as digital self-help, online diagnostics, telephone support, etc?
- Are parts, labor, and travel included in service contracts?

Value

Depending on the extent and planned expansion of your domestic and international operations, abilities to deliver across-the-board uniformity of services and solutions can be extremely important. A relationship with a trusted global supplier that has the proper capabilities, infrastructure, and flexibility can help to streamline your operational efficiency as you grow. This is an evolving relationship that continues to increase in value as time goes on.

4. Single-source capabilities for efficiency and savings

Needs

No one contests that the era of data chaos is upon us. One could then contend that adding more complexity and providers to your services landscape will simply exacerbate this chaos. With the right services organization, simplicity can be a relief and a way to streamline – eliminating excess paperwork, saving time, and delivering peace of mind for multiple aspects of your operations. With a single-source provider, finger pointing is eliminated and the ownership of issues is greatly enhanced.

Considerations

- How all-encompassing is a services candidate in terms of expertly servicing multiple brands of equipment, such as scanners, storage, and IT equipment?
- For which specific capabilities and offerings does the provider promise expertise? Can they offer examples/testimonials/case studies to back up these claims?
- Can multiple services be combined into one easy-to-manage contract? Is invoicing simplified?
- What assurances does the supplier offer of their ability to fulfill all obligations across the spectrum of services to be provided?
- What pricing advantages are offered if you combine services through the single supplier?

Value

Today, almost every organization is asked to accomplish more with less. Eliminating multiple-vendor hassles become especially valuable when your service and support organization cannot only provide efficient repair and maintenance, but can also add solutions that optimize your business in meaningful ways. With support for your entire environment, a robust service provider enhances your productivity and operational scope, which allows to you to place your focus on areas that matter most to your business.

"Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication."
– Leonardo Da Vinci

5. Continuing importance of repair and maintenance services

Needs

While the volume of information continues to explode, core business processes can't be neglected. Keeping scanners and IT storage equipment running with as much uptime as possible, and optimizing productivity/efficiency, not only remains essential, but increasingly important. According to research, the rise of smart phones and tablets has actually made companies MORE dependent on printing and scanning, not less.

Considerations

- What type of service organization are you speaking with: Insurance provider? Limited service? Small and local? Full service? How long has the service operation been in existence?
- Do Field Engineers (FEs) and remote support personnel focus only on information management technology? Or are they expected to be experts in additional fields of repair and maintenance?
- Are FEs and remote personnel employees or contractors? Do they hold certifications from manufacturers such as **Microsoft**, **Dell**, **Novell**, **Cisco**, **CDIA**, **SNIA**, etc?
- Is training on equipment and systems offered? What is the scope and depth of training offerings?
- What are the provider's proven first-time fix rates on service calls?
- When repairs are needed, are OEM or after-market parts used?

Value

A basic, bottom-line consideration – to be efficient and profitable, maximum uptime is crucial. By feeling confident that you will receive the best service and support, including repair and maintenance you gain productivity and peace of mind with a true, full-service-capability partner. Certain types of service organizations, such as insurance providers and limited-service organizations do have the mission nor the bandwidth to truly support most organizations with dedicated on-site and remote service.

"When online access became so prevalent, printing levels...actually went higher because there was so much more content available. Today, employees print an average of 400 pages per month, and many companies have figured out the easiest way to 'go paperless' is by digitizing documents online, but it isn't possible to eliminate printing and scanning."

–Ken Wellerstein, Vice-President/Research, Gartner [5]

6. Managing technology through targeted professional services

Needs

Socrates said, "The unexamined life is not worth living." To paraphrase the Greek philosopher, it could be said that "the unexamined organization is not living its full potential." Smart assessments, training, integration, and other professional services can advance and help your people and processes reach their full potential so you can accomplish more in multiple ways.

Considerations

- What is the range of professional services offered?

- What types of operator, administrator, and other training services are provided?

- Do professional services span the continuum of typical operational scenarios? From start-up assistance to end-of-life migration?

- What system-based services are provided? Scope of integration in terms of hardware and software? Relocation services?

- In terms of consulting, are workflow studies and assessments available?

- Does the provider offer a solution that synchronizes communications from all data sources into a holistic, intelligent platform?

Value

Smarter integration of information, people, and processes can improve customer outcomes, boost productivity, and achieve greater employee satisfaction. The combination of multiple products embedded in systems, platforms, or ecosystems – closely integrated with each other and third-party data – is a proven path to improved customer outcomes. This connection can help you take control and optimize work, better utilize data, and build closer relationships with customers.

7. Ensuring managed services are strategic and optimal

Needs

Today, customers count on managed service providers to be conscious of their corporate strategy, overall challenges, financial parameters, and technology requirements. From flexibility to planning, maintenance to back-up, your requirements for a managed services provider can be as varied as their capabilities. It's important to pick and choose the outsourcing areas that you believe will benefit your organization quickly and let you better utilize your own people.

Considerations

- With whom will you interact with as a primary contact?

- Is your help desk in house or outsourced?

- How all-encompassing are your managed services plans? Is there customization and flexibility available? Can these plans scale with our environment?

- Describe the IT support offered in terms of service calls, online/phone support, and experience of engineers and technicians.

- How would you build a technology plan or roadmap for our organization? How would it align with our technology, what we do, and our objectives?

- How deep are your offerings in terms of supporting our IT structure? Are migrations, customizations, upgrades, and training part of what is offered?

Value

When managed services are implemented to ideally target your prioritized needs, productivity grows as personnel can be reassigned to other valuable, strategic tasks. Your infrastructure costs, especially IT, may be cut significantly while network and server uptime is increased. Processes can be optimized, new capabilities launched, and your time to market sped.

The future of better service

As the importance of outcome-based services increases, the value of selecting the RIGHT services partner also grows. If you were to address just one key consideration question for each topic, consider these suggestions.

1. **Achieving value from technological expertise**
   In what ways do you make technology practical and valuable for customers?

2. **Finding a true partner vs. a basic provider**
   How do you go about truly learning a customer's business so that you can quickly add value beyond basic repair and maintenance?

3. **Global capabilities, infrastructure, and flexibility to meet demand and growth**
   If we opened two new facilities in different regions, would you be able to offer the same level and scope of services in those locations, and how can you assure us of your ability to do so?

4. **Single-source capabilities for efficiency and savings**
   In what five key ways can you save us time and money and add simplicity to our lives if we consolidate all of our services needs with your organization?

5. **Continuing importance of repair and maintenance services**
   How can you assure us that every FE and support person will be knowledgeable and bring expertise to servicing and maintaining our equipment?

6. **Managing technology through smarter professional services**
   How can you help us assess which professional services that you offer will give us the fastest and most impactful results, and how would you quantify those outcomes?

7. **Ensuring managed services are strategically correct and optimal**
   Which managed services that you offer do you believe would most benefit our organization and why?

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